

One Hot Mess

You'll laugh. You'll cry. You'll feel better about yourself. I promise.

Wednesday, September 5, 2018

Why Anonymous Content is Bullshit

Two years ago, someone tried to get me fired for my blog. It was one of the scariest and darkest moments of my career.

Although she didn't ultimately succeed, at the time I really thought she might. She wrote and persistently called the newspaper, her legislators, and my employer. I got a lawyer. It lasted months.

Throughout the entire difficult and humiliating ordeal, there was one thing I could be proud of: I stood behind every word I'd ever written, with my name attached to it. I own my writing, whether I'm dashing off a blog post or signing a pleading in court.

This complainant's screeds to *Anyone Who Would Listen™* included a smug "revelation" of my identity, as if I'd ever tried to hide who I was for even one second, and she was a gumshoe detective who was unmasking me, Scooby Doo-style, to the world.

My professional life and my life as a blogger are two separate and distinct parts of my existence, with the former, fortunately, protected by the First Amendment. It wouldn't take anyone with a WiFi connection more than two clicks to "figure out" who I am. My blog was never a secret to anyone. My identity has never been a secret.

And that's because anonymous writing (in my opinion) is a coward's endeavor. And if it's one thing I'm not, it's a coward. As a general rule, I do not believe in anonymous writing. Not on the internet, not in comment threads, and not in newspapers. If you have something that's important enough to say, and demand another person's time and attention to read, you should have the courage to own it.

I thought about this again when reading today's [anonymous op-ed in the New York Times](#) from a "senior Trump administration official" assuring the country that there are "adults" embedded in the administration, working to save America from Trump's worst impulses.

The Times defended the "rare" and (not coincidentally) click-baiting "step" of publishing anonymous content:

[A]t the request of the author, a senior official in the Trump administration whose identity is known to us and whose job would be jeopardized by its disclosure. We believe publishing this essay anonymously is the only way to deliver an important perspective to our readers.

Uh huh.

Predictably, ten zillion hot takes followed. Anonymity was good, because otherwise we'd be focusing on the author and not the content, and this person would be fired and no longer able to nobly "protect us" from Trump. Also: EVER HEAR OF THE FEDERALIST PAPERS?! GOTCHA!

Put aside the fact that it's un-democratic and alarming that the nation's top elected official is apparently being controlled by unelected appointees. That's called a coup. And simply "waiting out" Trump's presidency while the "grownups in the room" save us all is a failing that everyone now serving in Congress must live with--forever--as an abdication of their office and its own act of profound cowardice.

The more cynical (and to my mind, accurate) view of the Times op-ed is that its author is protecting themselves. Their career, their reputation, their party, and their future. They want their cake and they want to eat it too. They want plausible deniability when this national nightmare ends and the inevitable reckoning comes. They want to pull a self-satisfied "I told you so" someday, without having to accept or acknowledge their complicity in what's happened and continues to happen on their watch.

Most Read This Week

[Wait...Did I Just Eat a Testicle?](#)

[This is MATRICIDE.](#)

[10 Ways to Drive Your Man CRAZY in Bed!](#)

[I Wish I Could Have Been in the Room Where That 1989 Juicy Fruit Gum Ad Was Written](#)

[Ladies, This is the Vaginal Secretion Sweetener You Did Not Know You Needed!](#)

[David Bowie's Junk](#)

[You Wanna Burn Down the Patriarchy? Here Are 5 Simple Rules to Help You Do That](#)

[This Should Make Us All Very Mad.](#)

[10 Signs My Kids Are Possessed by Demons--And Yours Could Be Next!](#)

[Top 10 George Washington Scandals](#)

Labels

- [Advertising & Marketing](#) (55)
- [Alaskana](#) (251)
- [Animal Kingdom](#) (53)
- [Asshats](#) (399)
- [Awkward!](#) (31)
- [Bingo!](#) (10)
- [Books & Movies](#) (68)
- [Childhood Stories](#) (64)
- [Comics](#) (31)
- [Flowcharts](#) (28)
- [Food](#) (88)
- [Friendship](#) (45)
- [Good Times With Technology](#) (64)
- [Health & Fitness](#) (63)
- [Limericks](#) (17)
- [Miscellaneous](#) (184)
- [Music](#) (63)
- [Neurotic Musings](#) (165)
- [Parenting](#) (320)
- [Raps n' Bars](#) (28)
- [Style & Fashion](#) (88)
- [Women](#) (212)

It's an insurance policy, taken out on the public and administered by a major newspaper. Nothing more. That's called cowardice and lack of character.

And I'm sorry, but it's bullshit.



Posted by [One Hot Mess](#) at 8:27 PM



Labels: [Miscellaneous](#)

No comments:

Post a Comment

Note: Only a member of this blog may post a comment.

Enter your comment...

Comment as: [Google Account](#) ▼

[Publish](#)

[Preview](#)

[Newer Post](#)

[Home](#)

[Older Post](#)

Subscribe to: [Post Comments \(Atom\)](#)

About Me



[One Hot Mess](#)

[View my complete profile](#)

Blog Archive

- [2021](#) (5)
- [2020](#) (28)
- [2019](#) (66)
- ▼ [2018](#) (235)
 - [December](#) (8)
 - [November](#) (13)
 - [October](#) (14)
 - ▼ [September](#) (19)

[It Feels Extra Bad Being a Woman Lawyer This Week](#)

[I Rewrote No Scrubs for 2018](#)

[Top 10 George Washington Scandals](#)

[The Reckoning](#)

[Steff McKee for SCOTUS!](#)

[I Have a Leaked Diary Entry from 1982 Brett Kavanaugh...](#)

[The False Alarm Friend](#)

[I Wanna Do X With an Octopus!](#)

[The Kavanaugh Circus All Boils Down to One Word: E...](#)

[Nothing Will Ever Come of This, Because No One Wit...](#)

[Being a Mom is SO FUCKING STRESSFUL Y'ALL!](#)

[Widespread Manic Panic Room: A Step by Step Guide ...](#)

[Inspiring! This Woman Brought a Tuna Salad Sandwich...](#)

[Are You Fucking Kidding Me With This?](#)

[Interview With the Stranded Steller Sea Lion in Sitka](#)

[Embezzlement is Kind of a Friendship Dealbreaker](#)

[Why Anonymous Content is Bullshit](#)

[Please, Anything But a Quote Unquote Idea Person](#)

[De-Platforming Hate Speech is Not a Slippery Slope](#)

- [August](#) (11)
- [July](#) (14)
- [June](#) (18)
- [May](#) (26)
- [April](#) (27)
- [March](#) (27)

► [February](#) (29)

► [January](#) (29)

► [2017](#) (479)

► [2016](#) (667)

► [2015](#) (731)

► [2014](#) (187)

Simple theme. Powered by [Blogger](#).